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ABSTRACT

This report describes an in-service education program offered to teachers at a rural northeastern Head Start program to help them assess children's overall development by looking at their level of language development. The program focused on the case conference, a forum in which coordinators, teachers, home visitors, and sometimes parents meet to gather information used by teachers in planning teaching strategies. A deficiency in the teachers' ability to refer to language development in assessing a child's developmental stage was identified. To address this problem, workshops were developed in which a certified speech pathologist presented information to teachers about children's language acquisition and development, and also held informal discussions with the teachers. As a result, the six teachers participating in the program began to refer to children's language as an indicator of developmental stage during case conference meetings. Of the 52 case conferences reviewed after the workshops, 34 included references to language development. The evaluation of the program indicated that training focused on providing information, when associated with a practical application, enhanced teachers' job performance. (ME)

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Teacher Training: Raising Teacher's Awareness of Language Development as an Indicator of Developmental Stage in Head Start Children

by

Michele Strobridge

Cluster 43

A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1992

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This practicum report was submitted by Michele Strobridge under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

3-13-93

Date of Final Approval of Report

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ABSTRACT

Teacher Training: Raising Teacher's Awareness of Language Development as an Indicator of Developmental Stage in Head Start Children. Strobridge, Michele A., 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Inservice Training/ Early Childhood/ Head Start/Teacher Training/Language Development

This practicum was designed to incorporate the use of observation in obtaining language samples in Head Start classrooms as a viable method of documenting children's strengths and vulnerabilities. Training eight, female Head Start teachers, with diverse educational background, to recognize and report language ability during case conference meetings was emphasized. Using a didactic approach, a speech pathologist presented information to teachers related to language acquisition and development.

The primary source for gathering data on the training outcome was the case conference meeting, the forum used by Head Start staff, including teachers, to review child and family development. The writer attended 80 case conference review meetings after the inservice training. It was through this forum that the teachers were able to incorporate children's language skill during case conference.

The practicum outcome suggested that training, when associated with practical application, was an effective intervention for development of staff competence. Analysis of the data revealed that the participants had an increased awareness of children's language skill as demonstrated through verbal comments during the case conference meetings.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

Head Start programs are federally funded intervention preschools that provide comprehensive services to children and families living in poverty. The work setting for the writer is a Head Start program serving two hundred and twenty children and families in a rural northeastern community. A center based program is offered to families living within the designated transportation area. The designated area is defined as being no farther than twenty-five minutes from the Head Start center. A home based program is offered to those families residing out of the catchment area. One hundred and fifty-two families in this Head Start program receive full social service assistance, including food stamps and medicaid. Income for the remaining families is obtained through earned income. Sixty-five of the families live in homes with a single parent who has completed the tenth grade. Each year thirty-six to forty-three children enter the program not fully immunized. That is, these children have not received the required immunizations. Use of the hospital emergency room is the most common form of medical intervention.

Bus drivers, family workers, teachers, home based visitors, cooks and administrative staff work as a team to deliver comprehensive services to program participants. These services include but are not limited to health screenings, meals that meet minimum daily requirements as prescribed by the United States Department of Agriculture, parenting classes, and a developmentally appropriate preschool program. Parents are often employed at entry level positions, i.e.

classroom aides, bus drivers and cooks. The administrative team has worked together for eleven years, a characteristic that is not common to most Head Start programs.

The population involved consists of eight female center based Head Start teachers that team teach in groups of two. Each team is responsible for thirty-four children, in a four day double session locally designed option. The formal education background of the teachers reflects diverse experience. Six teachers have obtained their Child Development Associate (CDA) certification while employed in the program. CDA certification is awarded on the observed performance and portfolio presentation of the candidate. Determination of the candidate's competence is made by a panel of three people under the direction of the Council for Early Childhood Professional Recognition. Of those six, three have high school diplomas, two have associate degrees and one has a bachelors degree in education. Of the two remaining teachers, one has a bachelors degree in education and the assistant has a high school diploma. It is anticipated that within a year, the assistant will begin the CDA process.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

Nationally, Head Start programs are mandated to enroll children with disabilities. Every program has a staff member responsible for assuring that children with special needs receive the full compliment of services offered through the program. As Special Education and Associate Education Coordinator, the writer has lead responsibility for assuring that children with special education needs are fully integrated into all aspects of the program. The writer initiates referral for

evaluation to the appropriate agency when consensus has been reached through classroom observation, parental concern and developmental screening information.

Additional responsibilities include administration and scoring developmental screenings, case conference meetings, classroom observations, meeting with parents to discuss the educational concerns of children and advocating for proper placement when a child enters public school. It is participation in the program through a wide range of situations, including case conference meetings, classroom observation and education staff meetings that has provided the writer with a baseline of information from which staff development, particularly with teachers, needs to be addressed.

During implementation, the writer's responsibilities focused on enhancing teacher's skill in documenting children's language ability during case conference meetings. Providing training and individual team meetings allowed the writer to address specific areas needing improvement. In addition to the formal training, change was effected through informal exchange of information. This informal exchange often took place when the writer was asked about the development of a child. After assessment of health status, the writer would explore the expressive and receptive language skills of the child with the teachers.

The practicum provided the writer an opportunity to channel information, gleaned from the literature, classroom observation, and training provided by the speech pathologist, directly to practical application vis-a-vis case conference meetings. Either spontaneously or upon response to the writer's questions, teachers provided information about a child's expressive and receptive language ability.

Not only was change effected during the case conference process, inclusion of children's language skill has been represented in anecdotal observations and written reports. The writer's program has begun to implement a new educational curriculum and with deepened awareness of the significant role language development plays in the emerging skills of preschool children, teachers have a stronger foundation from which to build.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Systematic exchange of information is necessary when human service programs, such as Head Start, provide comprehensive intervention. To facilitate exchange of information in a manner consistent with program goals, regularly scheduled meetings are requisite. The case conference process is one avenue through which information is exchanged. Each week, Family Development Teams meet to discuss the status of a family vis-a-vis the program components, i.e. education, health, social service, nutrition and parent involvement. In addition to component coordinators, members of the team include: teachers, family worker or home visitor, and the parent, either directly or through written comments. As a member of that team, the writer probes for information to be used by the teachers in planning and implementing appropriate teaching strategies (see Appendix A for teacher's case conference guidelines).

During the case conference meetings, teachers discuss children's progress based on classroom observations. Color and name recognition, following classroom routine and rote counting are frequently cited as evidence of development. There is little or no reference made regarding verbal behavior or expressive language ability as an indicator of developmental stage. Examples of meaning (semantics) and form (syntax) are seldom cited. When a child has been diagnosed as speech and language impaired, teachers report that the

child goes to speech therapy or participates in specific language enrichment activities.

Establishing the profile of a child's developmental stage, during the case conference meeting, requires teachers to present information across all skill areas, including social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and expressive and receptive language. When any one of the skill areas is not included the developmental profile is incomplete. The problem is that eight Head Start teachers have not acquired a specific knowledge base for the development of preschool language skill and acquisition in order to verbally describe children's language development during case conference review meetings.

Problem Documentation and Causative Analysis

Evidence supporting the omission of language ability as an indicator of developmental stage was obtained from multiple sources. The sources included: classroom observation, case conference meetings, teacher reports, anecdotal records and review of trainings attended by teachers. Consideration was also given to the diverse educational experience and professional preparation of the education staff.

For two months during the spring of 1991, the writer attended eight case conference meetings. During the eight case conference meetings eighty children and families were reviewed. Children's developmental progress, as verbally reported by the teachers did not include expressive or receptive language ability. From eighty files, a random sample of forty case conference forms reflected no comments related to language development (see Appendix B for samples of case conference data). End of the year progress reports were reviewed. Of the forty

progress reports reviewed only fifteen had specific language comments. A review of workshops attended by the teaching staff during the past two years revealed that seven out of nine content areas selected related to social-emotional development and specific special needs. One workshop focused on whole language.

Analysis suggested that, a major underpinning supporting the current situation could be taken from a historical perspective. Head Start has traditionally operated outside the mainstream of the teaching profession. Salaries and educational background have not been commensurate with the public sector. An associated outcome has been that Head Start programs have generally not been able to attract fully trained teachers. It appeared then, that the lack of focused training effected the teachers ability to recognize and report children's language ability as an indicator of developmental stage.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

In-service and pre-service training have long been thought of as viable options for staff development. This approach is useful when a particular area of concern needs to be addressed. Based on this premise, a review of staff training literature reveals use of several techniques to employ for the purpose of enhancing teacher competence in assessing children's general development and language skill, in particular.

Bryen and Gerber (1981) suggest that samples of language can be used both to note indications of the child's linguistic capabilities and also as a cue to developing cognitive abilities. The authors discuss the need for language to be observed in various social contexts. Bryen and Gerber recommend obtaining and transcribing spontaneous language samples for the purpose of analyzing how

children use language for different purposes, e.g. informal, interpersonal interactions or giving information.

Garrard (1987) addresses the issue of preschoolers mastery of a mature language system and the use of observation as a viable method of obtaining language samples. Sensitive listening to children's language for a period of time and in a variety of activities with other children is suggested. Children without language mastery, Garrard notes, are considered at high risk for problems in reading and writing which are language-based skills.

Phinney (1982) discusses the use of observation to obtain a coherent developmental picture of individual children and supports observation in a natural setting where a child's underlying traits, attitudes and abilities emerge. Phinney stresses that skill in observation and interpretation of behavior [and language] is essential for teachers who want to be successful with children.

Additional evidence supporting observation in the assessment process is provided by Campagna (1977) and Lieven (1984). Both authors focus on the teacher's need to find out as much as possible about children's level of language skill in relation to the sequence of development. Bricher, Dennison, Watson, and Vincent-Smith (1973) state that teachers should probe and observe to determine whether or not child specific skills have been acquired. Mattrich (1972) found that when teachers actively listen to children, the chances to more effectively increase language proficiency and expressiveness are heightened. Aram, Ekellman and Nation's (1984) retrospective study of preschools clearly established that children with language disorders are at-risk for a range of later academic and social problems.

Warren and Kaiser (1988), Chafel (1986) and Salvia and Ysseldyke (1985) focused research on language and social competence. The research outcomes concluded that acquisition of language is a major component of social development. By observing language ability teachers can become aware of a range of abilities and vulnerabilities.

Research associated with language and characteristics of children with language delays is supported by Duntchin (1988) who identifies twelve characteristics that teachers can observe in children with language delays. Some of the more salient characteristics include: poor communication skills, reliance on gestures to make need understood, limited sentence production often fragmented by omission of words, and the child may appear unready for participation in structured experiences. Feinberg (1981) also describes observable characteristics of children with expressive language problems, including cognitive and behavior problems.

Several causes related to identification of development concerns vis-a-vis observation of expressive language ability have been identified in the literature. McCartney (1984) discusses children's language development as it is affected by environmental experiences, particularly in day care centers. Raver and Zigler (1991) suggest that the move to test-based curriculum is not developmentally appropriate. Observation of skills needs to continue as part of developmental assessment. Benham, Miller and Kontos (1988) consider providing staff training based on the program's self-assessment to fine tune delivery of quality programming to children and families.

There is sufficient evidence in the literature to support the use of observation as one technique used to assess a child's developmental stage. The in-service

training approach is useful when a specific content area is the focus. The outcome is usually heightened awareness, understanding and increased competence in job performance.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION

Goals and Expectations

The goal and expectation of the practicum strategy was to raise teachers awareness of language development as an indicator of developmental stage. During the eight case conference meetings it was anticipated that eight teachers would verbally describe the language skill for each of the ten children reviewed. In addition, those children potentially at-risk for developmental vulnerabilities would have been identified.

Expected Outcomes

It was expected, that through focused training on language development, teachers would be able to verbally describe the language skill of the ten children that were reviewed. It was further expected that the professional development records of eight teachers would reflect participation in training specifically focused on preschool language development. After the practicum implementation, during the weekly case conference meeting, each teaching team would discuss the language skill and development of the ten children reviewed. It was expected that ten out of ten profiles of children's classroom development would have examples of expressive and receptive ability.

Measurement of Outcome

To indicate empirical manifestation of the practicum strategy, behavioral observation, that is, the frequency of the teacher's verbal comments related to a child's language skill within the context of case conference review meetings was

recorded. It was expected that ten out of ten profiles of children's classroom development would have examples of expressive and receptive language as observed and reported by each teacher. A control sheet was used to record whether or not statements were made by teachers. During the eight case conference meetings, the writer noted the presence or absence of teacher comments regarding children's language development by writing either yes or no next to the case number being reviewed. The number of yes and no responses were noted. It was anticipated that of the eighty children reviewed during the implemented phase eighty statements reflecting language skill would be made (see Appendix D for control sheet).

During the final phase of implementation self-report by teachers was the method of measurement used. It was anticipated that self-report response to the questionnaire would reflect which aspects of the practicum were most effective in helping teachers recognize language skill as an indicator of developmental stage (see Appendix E for evaluation questions). A journal was maintained to record events that enhanced and hindered the goal and objective.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solution

The problem presented in this practicum was that eight Head Start teachers did not have acquired knowledge about preschool language skill and acquisition in order to verbally describe children's language development during case conference review meetings. Failure to include a child's language skill as an indicator of developmental stage could be attributed to a lack of knowledge. Evidence supporting the lack of reported language skill in preschool school children was gathered through teacher's written reports, anecdotal records, case conference meetings, training records, and consideration of the diverse educational background of the teaching staff. Assessment of the situation and analysis of the evidence lead to the tentative conclusion that insufficient training specifically related to language development resulted in exclusion of language ability as an indicator of developmental stage.

A review of the literature suggested several possible solutions. McLean and Vincent (1984) demonstrated adults could be quickly taught to implement techniques during natural play that would expand observed targeted language structure. Abbott-Shim (1990), Mudd and Wolery (1987) and Nurss (1980) support staff training geared to classroom practices which increase implementation of new information and skill of teachers. Hough, Nurss, and Goodson (1984) stress that teachers be sensitized to the need for a variety of language interactions particularly those in which the child expresses ideas and feelings.

Head Start classrooms, generally, provide environments in which teachers can usually observe the language of children in contexts that are fairly normal and comfortable. Muma's (1978) research supported the use of language as a means of identifying developmental stage by stressing that assessment of language can be best achieved in natural or near natural contexts where typical behavior would most likely be represented. Training teachers to recognize language skill through ongoing observation provides a holistic assessment rather than fragmented language skills gathered through isolated testing (Schory, 1990).

Training, as a viable solution for staff development, is supported by the National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development. Bredekamp (1991) suggested that one hallmark of a successful organization is vision for achieving high-quality, developmentally appropriate care and education. One facet of quality programming is well articulated professional pre-service and in-service training linked to improvements in professional practice.

Consideration of alternative strategies for staff training techniques, according to the Child Care Information Exchange (1988) included but were not limited to the following approaches: 1) peer evaluation, that is, teachers pair up for observation of an aspect of development that is of particular concern; 2) tailored courses provided by a college, where staff size, cost and actual time for training could be major considerations; and 3) simulation games where teachers could be assigned hypothetical situations or problems to solve.

Staff training, in diverse configurations, is viewed as a viable means for enhancing staff competence. Focused in-service staff training was selected as the solution strategy. Based on the evidence, gathered through a variety of sources, the

staff training delivered through a didactic approach allowed teaching staff to obtain concrete knowledge about language acquisition. The training information was directly applied to specific job related responsibilities, in contexts meaningful to teachers, i.e. case conference meetings.

Description of Selected Solution

In-service training was the selected solution strategy. The intended outcome was teacher's raised awareness in recognizing language skill as an indicator of developmental stage. The training was to become the foundation that provided teachers with more concrete knowledge about language development. It was anticipated that during case conference meetings, relevant information provided by the teachers would describe the developmental stage of a child's language skill.

Content of the solution strategy, in-service training, is supported by the Piagetian construct that views language as a part of symbolic function. It is the development of the semiotic function, that is, the cognitive capacity for symbol use, that makes it possible for the child to use words symbolically. Language makes it possible for the child to evoke covert mental images and overt deferred initiations as representations of non present realities (Flavell, 1977). The ability to identify symbolic use of words enables teachers to recognize whether or not a child has reached a given developmental stage.

Schory (1990) stresses teacher training in language acquisition by emphasizing the importance of context in language learning. Classrooms provide an environment where teachers can listen to children's natural use of language and with a trained ear, recognize whether or not the child is functioning within normal range for the child's age. The principles for learning language and communication

are identified by Norris and Damico (1990). The principles include, but are not limited to the following: 1) language for the formulation, comprehension and transmission of meaning; 2) language use always occurs in a context; and 3) learning is an active constructive process rather than passive. King and Goodman (1990) address the need for speech and language pathologists to train those that work with children to gain an understanding of what language is, how it is leaned and related to cognitive development.

Report of Action Taken

Through the selected solution, in-service training, teachers attended a workshop focused on language development. The intended outcome was teacher's raised awareness of language development as an indicator of developmental stage for enhanced ability in documenting a child's developmental stage through language. The training was developed and conducted by a certified speech pathologist working with children enrolled in the program. The pathologist discussed the following aspects of language: 1) language as a symbol system used to express ideas through pictures, spoken words, written, and gestural symbols; 2) language and it's function; 3) development of language from infancy; 4) principles for learning language, i.e. language is learned in meaningful situations; and 5) principles of communication that include, not taking control of conversation; waiting for and expecting a response from the child; being responsive to what the child is saying and avoid being directive.

To assist the teachers in becoming more comfortable implementing newly acquired skills, the writer attended three education component meetings to discuss case conference meetings in terms of teacher's comments as related to children's

language development. The characteristics of children with language deficiencies were reviewed. To individualize teaching team development, the writer met with three teaching team's and discussed whether or not the training and focus on language had effected the observation of children as related to language development. The training was audio taped for future use and for the teachers unable to attend the training.

There were several variables, within the ecology of the writer's program environment, that supported in-service training as a practical and feasible strategy for staff development. Consideration was given to the predetermined number of training days during implementation; practical application of training content; limited access to the professional providing training; implementation feasibility and commitment to provide professional development to staff. The cost considerations to implement the practicum were minimal. The only money spent was for workshop supplies. There was no cost for use of the facilities. Given the programmatic considerations, evidence documenting the problem, and support from the literature, in-service training was a feasible strategy for the problem.

During implementation the writer coordinated, supervised and completed the solution strategy and ancillary activities with the exception of the actual training, which was conducted by the speech pathologist. The primary focus was the case conference meetings, the forum where teachers discussed children's development. The writer attended eight case conference meetings and documented whether or not teachers described developmental skill vis-a-vis language ability. Meeting with teachers as a group and individually with teaching teams to discuss the training and

case conference meetings provided the writer with concrete information upon which to evaluate the solution strategy.

The development of a section of the program's professional library was established specifically for language development. At least twenty-five sources of information related to language acquisition of preschool children have been made available to parents and staff (see Appendix G for library reference list).

By assessing the performance of classroom teachers, through observation during team case conference meetings and review of education staff professional development records it it possible for child development programs to plan in-service training. The purpose of in-service training is to raise staff awareness of a specific skill in order to indicate children's developmental stage.

All of the solution strategy activities involved coordination with the other program components. Synchronizing the activities was the writer's responsibility. Securing calendar dates, requisitioning equipment, and preparing materials were details completed by the writer. The program director, education coordinator and speech pathologist reviewed the outline and gave the writer support to proceed. The agency viewed the practicum process as training for all involved and supported its implementation.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

This practicum was designed for eight Head Start teachers to acquire specific knowledge focused on the development of preschool language skill and acquisition. The objective was to have eight teachers verbally describe the language skill for each of the ten children reviewed during case conference meetings. Through training, conducted by a speech pathologist, teachers were provided with information about language acquisition through each developmental stage. As a result of implementing the practicum strategy, during case conference meetings, six teachers began to use children's language as an indicator of developmental stage. Of the fifty-two reviews, there were thirty-four verbal responses directly related to language development. The remaining eighteen reviews did not have any comments related to language development.

TABLE OF VERBAL RESPONSES

Number of scheduled case conference reviews	80
Number of actual case conference reviews	52
Number of case conference reviews with responses reflecting children's language ability	34
Number of case conference reviews without responses reflecting children's language ability	18

Case conference meetings, included during implementation, occured in the spring. A representative sample of comments made after the training can be found in Appendix H. The identification of children at-risk, as an outcome of the solution

strategy, was not attained. Developmentally vulnerable children had already been identified.

The second outcome, documentation of professional development was attained. Included in the professional development record of the the teachers, was participation in staff training specifically focused on preschool language development.

Six teachers responded to the evaluation questions assessing the solution strategy. Unanimous consensus, among the teachers, revealed that training focused on information to be used immediately, with practical application, enhanced job performance. The training was helpful because it provided concrete information that was used to assist assessment of language as an indicator of developmental stage. Meeting individually with each teaching team was the second most helpful strategy for teachers. The discussion was directly focused on children with whom the teachers were involved.

Conversation during the education component meetings was the least helpful. There was not enough time for discussion. Other component issues took precedent, i.e. scheduling of events, playground safety, and overall program concerns were cited as reasons, albeit legitimate, for not being able to discuss the training.

Discussion

Just prior to and during the implementation phase there were two unforeseen events that occurred. Each event diminished the overall potential impact that the solution strategy could have made. The first event occurred within a month of the practicum approval. The writer's agency was awarded a grant to coordinate a

fifteen county High/Scope Lead Teacher training grant. The four week training, spread out over four months, involved the lead teacher from every classroom in the writer's program. In between the weeks of lectures, each trainee had to implement a particular aspect of the High/Scope approach. The intensity of this training affected every part of the program. A positive contribution was the focus on children's active learning and the developmental approach to the acquisition of skills with particular attention to the role language plays. Teachers were able to build onto the concepts learned through the practicum training.

The second event affected the expected outcomes. A teaching team was involved in an automobile accident several weeks after implementation began. As a result, substitutes were hired for the ten week recuperation period. The case conference meetings for this room were conducted on an as needed basis. Unless there were specific classroom or family concerns, the substitutes were not involved in the case conference process. Therefore, the anticipated number of total reviews to be conducted was reduced from eighty to sixty and the number of teachers participating, during implementation, was six instead of eight.

Audio taping the training session provided the teachers unable to attend the opportunity to hear the presentation. While this approach was not ideal, it did make it possible for all involved to obtain the information. The audio tape was added to the library resources focused on language.

An unanticipated outcome was a critical assessment of the guidelines teachers use during the case conference meetings. As a result the guidelines were revised to include questions focused on emerging skills (see Appendix I for revised

guidelines). It was felt that this would assist the teachers in keeping focused on skill acquisition and language in particular.

The agency newsletter, a bimonthly publication, reaches a very large audience, including parents, local and national elected officials, regional and national Head Start staff, and a host of community professionals concerned about young children. During implementation a special feature on language development was included. The focus was on language acquisition and the home as a learning environment (see Appendix F for newsletter articles).

Of the fifty-two case conference reviews, thirty-four included specific comments on language skill. The remaining eighteen reviews did not have any comments related to language development. Failure to include observations of language as an indicator of developmental stage was attributed to: 1) lack of time to adequately prepare information; 2) teachers were attending another training during case review time; and 3) there was significant concern about a child's physical and emotional well-being, that at the time, language skill was a secondary concern.

Recommendations

To more fully accomplish the goal and objective of this practicum several changes and adjustments need to be considered. The training must be expanded to include broader understanding of the social and emotional aspects of language development. Greater understanding and skill in facilitating play must be established in order to expand children's language competence.

Secondly, the process of documenting the language progress of children needs to be embellished. In addition to the case conference meetings, teachers have three program opportunities to formally discuss language development. These

include meeting with parents for: 1) the first eight week review; 2) the mid-year report; and 3) the end of the year report. A revised practicum strategy would include but not be limited to, assessment of observations of language in a variety of settings. Through focused observations of language in diverse settings teachers and support staff would gain greater understanding of the child's expressive and receptive capabilities.

Thirdly, during the monthly parent activity meetings, there could be a brief, five to eight minute presentation on language development. This approach would reach a greater number of the parents over a sustained period of time. It would also create the opportunity for parents to ask questions about specific situations.

Dissemination

To help sustain gains made during implementation and to continue development of teacher's skill in documenting language developmental stage, the following approaches would be considered as next steps: 1) During monthly education staff meetings a brief, five minute language update could be incorporated. This could be an oral report of a research article or hand-out of a specific journal article focused on language; 2) The speech pathologist would respond to teacher's language specific questions during an education component meeting. An alternative would be to have the teachers describe, in writing, the language concern. The speech pathologist would provide a written response. While not the preferred approach, it would allow for the exchange of information. Teachers would not have to wait four weeks until the next component meeting; 3)The current approach to speech therapy, in the writer's program is the pull-out model. The child is taken, by the speech pathologist, to a separate room for therapy. Consideration of

providing speech and language therapy within the classroom environment would not only make it more natural for the child, it would also allow the speech pathologist and teachers to work together every day. The inclusion of special therapies in the child's most natural and least restrictive environment also meets the spirit and intent of special education legislation. As a second practicum, implementation inclusionary practices needs to be given consideration.

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APPENDIX A

CASE CONFERENCE GUIDELINES BEFORE TRAINING

APPENDIX A

CASE CONFERENCE GUIDELINES BEFORE TRAINING

Education (anecdotal notes, individual plans):

Parent Involvement (in the classroom, field trips):

Mental Health (how the child functions):

Nutrition (variety of foods eaten):

Additional comments or concerns:

APPENDIX B

REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS BEFORE TRAINING

APPENDIX B

REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS BEFORE TRAINING

1. good social skills
2. work on colors
3. active - can attend in small groups
4. unsure emotionally - shy
5. likes to paint
6. gets letters and numbers confused - likes computers
7. good skills
8. cognitive delays - refer
9. no concerns
10. talks too loud, aggressive - guide in social skills
11. independent
12. gaining self confidence
13. adjusted well - ready for cognitive skills
14. difficult to assess ability
15. beginning to write name
16. needs positive self image
17. good skills
18. no concerns
19. needs to work on colors
20. strength - counting skills
21. good attention
22. behavior concerns

23. work on social skills
24. fine motor skills needs improvement
25. gets along with peers
26. follows routine; transition not easy
27. likes computer - not ready for small group
28. routine at meal time not easy
29. ready to write name
30. likes group games - not sure when working one to one
31. small motor skills weak
32. play in family area - not interested in learning games
33. likes to play with friends - gets along well
34. average ability
35. likes to listen to stories
36. skills not firmly established
37. positive self image
38. able to attend well in small group
39. needs more work on colors and following routine
40. difficult for him to complete puzzles

APPENDIX C

TRAINING OUTLINE

APPENDIX C

TRAINING OUTLINE

I. Language - A symbol system used to express ideas, transposing what is known into vocabulary and vocabulary into sentences.

A. Symbol Systems

1. Spoken
2. Pictures
3. Written
4. Gestural

B. Receptive Language - understanding what is heard. It is how language is understood when heard.

C. Expressive Language - ability to speak and use words. It is how receptive language abilities are used.

II. Speech - small part of language - physical motor movements involved in making sounds.

III. Conversation - how language is used for a variety of reasons and situations, with a variety of people.

IV. Language Functions

A. Communicative Function

1. Social routines (ritualizing)
2. Regulate others behavior (control)
3. Exchange of information
4. Express feelings

5. Imagination
6. Metalinguistics (ability to talk about language)

B. Non-Communicative Function

1. Directing own behavior
2. Imagination

V. Overview of Language as it Develops from Infancy

A. Stage 1 - Pre-Linguistic (0-12 months)

1. Reflexive vocalizations or acts, i.e. sucking, crying, gazing, vocalizing
2. Reciprocal communication from adult, i.e. rocking, imitation, smiling

B. Stage 2 - Symbolic (9-21 months)

1. Child constantly trying to seek out and give information (two word utterances)
2. Vocabulary consists primarily of nouns

C. Stage 3 - Symbolic Relations (18-36 months)

1. Communication becomes social tool
2. Words take on new meanings when combined with other words (two to four word utterances)

D. Stage 4 - Complex Symbolic Relations (30 months and older)

1. Adults are aware of what a child knows by what child tells the adult
2. Creative use of language

V. Principles for Learning Language

A. Language is learned in meaningful situations

1. Children must be active participants
2. Language does not develop purely from imitation

a. passive vs active learning

B. Vocabulary Development

1. Adult becomes talking dictionary
2. Labels for daily living
3. Increasing receptive knowledge

C. Language develops form the general to the specific, i.e. plant-flower-daisy

D. Conversation Partners

1. Adults as the facilitator
    a. active listeners
    b. providing language models
    c. reinforcing any communicative attempts
2. Child learns that language helps to get what is wanted from the environment

VI. Five Principles of Communication

A. Balance

1. Not taking control of conversation - adults often take too many turns.
2. Avoiding bombardment of questions

B. Patience

1. Wait for and expect a response from the child
2. Stay on the child's level, physically and topically

C. Responsiveness

1. React to the child's response
2. Show interest

D. Be less directive

1. Develop confidence and control in the child

E. Emotional Attachment

1. People learn better from people they like
2. Children learn more when they say with a person and an activity
3. Try to be more interesting than distracting

Remember:

A language delayed child is often called slow to respond, confused, impulsive, inattentive or even obstinate. If these reactions are overwhelmingly negative or punishing toward the child, emotional problems may arise.

Pre-school teachers often limit communicative attempts in order to "keep things simple" for the child. Avoid the following: 1) relying on gestures and demonstrating for giving instructions; 2) using restricted verbal forms; and 3) misunderstanding the child's vocabulary knowledge and labeling ability as having functional language skill.

APPENDIX D

CONTROL SHEET

APPENDIX D

CONTROL SHEET

Case Conference I		Case Conference II	Total Language Comments Yes	No
Team 1	Child 1 Yes Child 2 Yes Child 3 Yes Child 4 Yes Child 5 No Child 6 Yes Child 7 No Child 8 No Child 9 Yes Child 10 Yes	Child 1 Yes Child 2 No Child 3 No Child 4 Yes Child 5 Yes Child 6 Yes Child 7 No Child 8 Yes Child 9&10 not reviewed	12	6
Team 2	Child 1 No Child 2 Yes Child 3 Yes Child 4 Yes Child 5 No Child 6 Yes Child 7 No Child 8 No Child 9 Yes Child 10 not reviewed	Child 1 No Child 2 Yes Child 3 Yes Child 4 Yes Child 5 Yes Child 6 No Child 7 No Child 8 Yes Child 9&10 not reviewed	10	7
Team 3	Data not collected due to accident.		0	0
Team 4	Child 1 No Child 2 Yes Child 3 No Child 4 Yes Child 5 No Child 6 Yes Child 7 Yes Child 8,9,10 not reviewed	Child 1 Yes Child 2 Yes Child 3 No Child 4 No Child 5 Yes Child 6 Yes Child 7 Yes Child 8 Yes Child 9 Yes Child 10 Yes	12	5

APPENDIX E

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

APPENDIX E

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. Has the language development training affected your teaching and documentation of language developmental stage? Check one and or both. Explain your answer (s).

Yes

No

2. What was most helpful to you?

   a. training

   b. individual meetings

   c. component meetings

3. What more can be done to help you develop your teaching skill in terms of recognizing developmental strengths and vulnerabilities in preschool children?

APPENDIX F

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

APPENDIX F

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Article One

Talking with your children is one of the best ways to help language to develop. Here are some ways to help your child learn language:

1. Teach your child relationships of words, objects and ideas by talking about similarities or differences. For example: There are two cats, one is black and one is yellow.

2. Encourage your child to tell you stories using books and magazine pictures.

3. Sorting objects is a good activity for learning differences. Let your child sort child size socks from adult socks or separate the spoons from the forks.

4. You can expand your child's spoken sentences. For example:

Child: Water

Parent: I see you are drinking water.

Child: Kitty run.

Parent: Yes, the kitty is running.

Remember: Your child needs your help when learning language.

Article Two

Speech is how we say words. The words we use when speaking is language. Learning to use words is one of the major jobs for young children. Children are eager to learn language because of the emotional need to be part of what is going on in the environment.

We need to encourage children to communicate with us by using words. By watching what children are doing and what they are interested in, we can talk with them about what is holding their attention and this will encourage them to use language.

Here are some ways to encourage language with your children:

1. Ask your child to tell you about events that happened during the day.
2. Look at pictures together. Ask questions about what you see.
3. Let your child help you with small jobs, for example, when you are going to have potatoes for dinner, let your child wash them. This is interesting and fun for a child.
4. Ask questions like: a) what will happen if... b) how does it feel when... and c) what can you do to...

When children are able to communicate, whether through words, crying if the child is a baby, self confidence is acquired and the children can feel good about themselves.

APPENDIX G

LIBRARY REFERENCE LIST

APPENDIX G

LIBRARY REFERENCE LIST

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APPENDIX H

REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS AFTER TRAINING

APPENDIX H

REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS AFTER TRAINING

1. expressive language emerging
2. able to label pictures; has begun to initiate conversation
3. verbally involved with other children, especially pretend play
4. responds in one word phrases; sometimes appears to not understand what is being asked
5. expressive language skill well developed
6. speaks in complete sentences; very verbal
7. not able to verbally express self; becomes upset when oral communication is necessary
8. uses a lot of baby talk; concept development weak
9. responds to questions with appropriate answers
10. able to verbally describe cause and effect; uses a lot of words to describe action
11. beginning to speak in complete sentences; is becoming comfortable in small groups
12. makes up own rhymes
13. verbally expresses feelings; able to verbally defend self
14. has good sentence structure; vocabulary increasing

APPENDIX I

REVISED GUIDELINES

APPENDIX I

REVISED GUIDELINES

Education (anecdotal notes, individual plans): How does the child approach learning/social situations? Think about language skill and development. Does the child use oral and receptive abilities effectively?

Screening Results: Speech_____ Developmental_____

Parent Involvement (in the classroom, field trips, expressed interests, or any parent input):

Mental Health: How child functions emotionally and socially? Think about the child's social development; the child's inner sense of control.

Health (recurring illness, hygiene concerns, etc.):

Nutrition (approach to food, interaction during meals);

Bus behavior: Check with bus driver

Additional comments or concerns: